

Problem I

Lack of communication between members of the press, loss of information

Deliberation

Communication has always been a problem at Ooligan given the constant turnover of student members and leaders. Tasks are often dropped or forgotten and managers tend to not know what is going on in other parts of the press. With increased communication between press members, work would be able to flow more smoothly through the publishing process.

Solution

- Each department is required to make a public Trello board and review the assignments queued there at the beginning of each term. The boards should contain clearly defined, “small-batch” assignments for group members. For ease of use across departments, all boards will follow the same format based on Kanban principles.
- Project Managers have a master schedule Trello board that everyone can see.
- Every department will meet separately in the same room immediately follow executive meetings.
- Departments briefly update on their tasks for the week at Exec meetings.
- A list of each department’s tasks should be created and added to the Lab/Studio site.
- A Google Site will be made for every book acquired here-

after, and department managers are required to upload all relevant final documents to the book’s Google Site.

- Debriefing of project managers each term so everyone is on the same page, including how Trello boards and small batches work.

Reasoning

BULLETS 1 & 2

If every department had a public Trello they kept up to date with their current projects, transparency and communication would increase in the press. It would be much easier for PMs to see what else is on a department’s plate and plan accordingly, along with the departments being able to see on the PM’s Trello board what assignments may be arriving in the future.

The Trello boards would be set up in the Kanban system with three columns titled “Ready,” “Doing,” and “Done.” PMs would place assignments, such as “Marketing Plan,” with due dates attached in the “Ready” column, far in advance of when they are due so managers can plan future projects accordingly. Department managers would then take these larger assignments and break them down into “small batches,” that is reasonably sized chunks that one person can complete in a short amount of time. When these tasks are assigned, a person’s name would be attached and the task would be moved to the “Doing” column. Once the task is completed, it would be moved to “Done.” Small batch sizes move work forward in a continuous flow and decrease project time overall.

BULLETS 3 & 4

Executive meetings currently last anywhere from ten minutes to an hour, but the press has the room for an hour and fifty minutes. Holding department meetings immediately after executive meetings, in the same room, highly increases communication between departments and builds community by providing an opportunity for everyone to know one another and speak to each other in person. No more sending an email and waiting to hear back for days—you can simply walk over to talk to another department. If two departments need to collaborate with each other, for instance with something like collateral which involves marketing and design, they can easily meet together. Additionally, it avoids the scheduling nightmare of having different workweeks for each department since everyone's workweek revolves around the same meeting time. Returning to the system of department managers briefly explaining at Exec what they completed last week and what they are planning for the following week would make sure everyone in the press is on the same page. If something is needed from another department, or if it is decided two departments should meet together during the department time, it can be easily expressed during Exec.

BULLET 5

Currently, projects often are lost or abandoned because no one knows who is in charge. This creates a harmful environment where everyone blames each other for incomplete work. We have created a list of all the departments and the tasks each is responsible for. Clearly assigning all the tasks

helps clarify which departments are accountable for which aspects of the publishing process. This list is included in our supplemental materials.

BULLET 6

Making a Google Site for each book that contains all the final documents better organizes the files that press members need but can never seem to find. Having the documents organized by book is more efficient than emailing other students and asking them to send documents that only exist on his or her computer or Google Drive. Additionally, the book site would also help preserve Ooligan's institutional memory since students would be able to go into past book sites to see how a task was accomplished previously. To better organize institutional data, we have included a screenshot of a book's Google Site with the examples of all the relevant data that should be uploaded to it.

BULLET 7

At the beginning of each term, it would be good to have a debriefing of the PMs, including reviewing how Trello works. Currently, PMs write an exit essay when they are done with their tenure, but this is not helpful for PMs who join either at the beginning of a project or before a senior PM has left. Meeting all together would bring new PMs quickly up to speed both on the project itself and workflow practices. It would be much easier to talk about project pitfalls and goals in person rather than in a written document.

Problem II

Ambiguity in task responsibility on the managerial level.

Deliberation

After creating a department task list, we realized that there was no clear owner for many of the tasks. Tasks that didn't fit into a particular department, or that department managers didn't begin on their own, were being completed by project managers. It didn't seem like Ooligan Press students were aware of the press hierarchy. The job of project managers, we believed, wasn't to complete tasks, but to facilitate the workflow through departments.

On the next hierarchical level, department managers, we personally experienced the same problem of ambiguity. When a task wasn't assigned to a single department manager, it was less likely that one of them would step up and take ownership of managing the task.

All these deliberations, in addition to conclusions drawn from reading the "Working With Others" chapter of *The Personal MBA*, led us to conclude that ambiguity in task responsibility was a big factor in slowing down Ooligan Press' efficiency and workflow.

Solution

A document detailing a clear delineation of tasks, with one department ultimately in charge of moving each task from genesis to completion, should be added to the Lab/Studio Google site.

Tasks should be further assigned to one department manager, and his or her name should be clearly attached to the project on a Trello

card. The other department managers can certainly help with the assignment, but only one should be ultimately responsible. The project manager associated with the task gives the assignment a hard deadline.

The hierarchy of Ooligan Press should be enforced more transparently: Group members to Department Managers to Project Managers to Abbey & Per.

To do this, each department should be evaluated by the project managers that worked with them at the end of each term. This evaluation will be factored into the department manager's final grade.

Project managers regulate the project schedule and are the liaison between author and press and between departments, but are not in charge of the creation of any materials. Because they are above department managers on the chain of command, they have the final say on the appropriateness of all work they receive from departments.

Reasoning

Tasks get dropped or delayed because of bystander apathy. No one knows who's ultimately responsible, so everyone steps back and expects the other person to complete the task. With each task made transparent and clearly assigned to a particular department, the person ultimately in charge will be more accountable for the task and this will keep the work moving forward.

The job of the project manager is to be the communicator between all involved, both inside and outside the press, and as such,

they are the most knowledgeable about the project. Because of this knowledge, if they feel strongly that work done by a department does not fit with the brand of the book, they have the final say. Having each department be evaluated by the project managers that worked with them that term will make clear the hierarchy as well as increase accountability in department managers.

Project managers should not be creating material—collateral, for instance—from beginning to end, because they have plenty of other tasks and communication to facilitate. Taking project managers out of the workflow and making them the facilitator of it will give them more time to oversee and help with all tasks. Work will be pulled forward by them instead of pushed through by department managers.

In order to decrease ambiguity in task responsibility, we have created a delineation of tasks by department. This list is included in our supplemental materials.

Problem III

First term students' lack of press understanding slows momentum.

Deliberation

Upon looking at new students within the work groups, we discovered that new students were lacking the knowledge to do their work correctly and quickly. In each group each member depends on the work efficiency of the other, so if one person can't keep up it holds the whole group back. This is when we decided that first term students should experience each group their first term here.

Solution

For their first term, students will participate in each department until they've been in all of them. Taking new students out of the work flow will allow them to learn, but work too. Your first term should be used for familiarizing yourself with the press workflow & Ooligan.

Reasoning

Participating in each department allows new students to get a feel for what each department does. Understanding how the press works as a whole will increase community, transparency, and communication among the departments along with bringing new students up to speed in a more timely manner. Even though it may seem like they would become overwhelmed with the tasks each group is responsible

for, we would argue that by giving them the option of visiting all eight groups once a week all term (or a select five, two weeks in a row) they could dip their toes in a get comfortable.

The first option that would be offered would be a one time visit to each different group for each week of the term. It's kind of a wham-bam approach to it, but it will give those who feel confident a taste of how things are done and possibly even finish an assignment. The second option that would be offered would occur in two week time periods. One group for two weeks straight, for five groups in total all term. This is for the student who wants to be thorough, or perhaps they don't know anything about publishing, either way it allows the student to move through the groups at a slower pace. This will make for one week of learning about the group and a second week of being able to do the work.

When asking some of the new students this term if they would have seen this as useful, I heard almost all positive responses. New students are excited to be at Ooligan Press and in order to see how a press works they need to be able to experience each piece of it with enough time to process that new information. By implementing this new once at eight or twice at five process we believe there will be not only a growth in knowledge of the press workflow, but also an increase in interest for future Project Management positions.

I asked second term students if they would be interested in applying for a Project Management position and most of them said they wouldn't because it seems a bit stressful, chaotic, and frankly they didn't know about any of the groups. By putting into effect this new process for new students it

will avoid a lack of knowledge and allow for less errors later and more interest in details and taking charge as a PM.

Problem IV

Students' lack of accountability slows momentum & increases errors.

Deliberation

After working our way through each of the prior problems one thing kept coming up. This also came as two of the members of this group have been department managers. That problem was that students weren't particularly accountable for the work that they were producing. Work is often late, incomplete, or sub-standard to the point that managers have to do the work themselves.

Solution

Provide group members with smaller batch sizes, specific goals, hard deadlines, and consequences for failed work so as to prevent managers from having to do the work.

Reasoning

Smaller batch sizes, or small self-contained assignments, are proven to increase productivity. The smaller assignments also mean students can take responsibility for an entire task, including its completion and quality. The small batch size solution is similar to having clear task delineation for departments, but on the next hierarchical level, and will have the same result of decreased apathy and increased account-

ability. Assigning someone in editing 300 pages to edit in 3 weeks can seem daunting and will give the group member an opportunity to procrastinate. By making it 100 pages in a week, it makes it smaller and harder for the group member to put off the work. The same thing would apply in most groups. Assigning a marketing plan with a deadline in three weeks would be easy to ignore while doing part of the marketing plan in one week is much easier.

By having specific goals for group members it makes it easier to see what needs to be done in each group by the specific members. This allows the managers to delegate projects be they large or small to any number of people in a group.

Accounting for subpar work is something that Ooligan hasn't done before and is something that needs to be contained. Often managers will have redo work that is turned in by a group member or flat out not completed. If a manager has the power to make the group members accountable, either by making them redo the work and not getting hours for it, or by not getting hours for it in the first place. Managers should be able to assign work to any person in the group and that person should be able to get it done within the set amount of time. Managers should not have to come through and either redo the work or continually badger the group member to get the work done. Assignments have hard deadlines, presumably Monday if all meetings are moved to right after Exec.

In order to properly account for work the managers currently write a review of what the group member did. The current point system is fifty points for that one letter. The letter should count for no more than twenty points, with the remaining thirty points dispersed between the quality of work, completion of work on time, and participation within the group.